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SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EUR/OHI AND EUR/AGS

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TAGS: [KNAR](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [AU](#)

SUBJECT: Status of Efforts to Support Jewish Cemeteries  
in Austria

THIS MESSAGE IS SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED.

Washington Agreement  
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¶1. (U) According to the January 2001 U.S.-Austrian Washington Agreement on Holocaust property, "Austria will provide additional support for the restoration and maintenance of Jewish cemeteries, known or unknown, in Austria." Under these terms, the Federal Government has encouraged states and municipalities, who have jurisdiction over cemeteries under the Austrian constitution, to provide greater support for the restoration and maintenance of Jewish cemeteries.

Vienna  
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¶2. (U) The City of Vienna has started restoration work in an old Jewish cemetery in the 18th district, comprising about 7000 graves. The cemetery dates back to 1784 and is under protection as an historic "monument." In 2003, the City spent 170,000 Euros to remove 92 aging trees in the cemetery - an expensive task due to the care needed to cut huge old trees without damaging graves. The City then began a renovation of the cemetery entrance in order to convert it into a museum.

¶3. (U) Recently, however, the City of Vienna announced that it would not pay the 14 million euros necessary for the remaining renovation work. Instead, the city called on the federal government to finance the project. Vienna Mayor Michael Haeupl noted that the City provided 300,000 euros to the Jewish Community (IKG) in 2005 for the renovation of cemeteries.

Other states, "Schalom"  
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¶4. (U) Work is underway in other Austrian states to renovate cemeteries. States and municipalities have also provided support to the NGO "Schalom" for volunteer work to restore Jewish cemeteries. "Schalom" has done major work at the Jewish section of the Vienna Central Cemetery to clean and restore graves.

¶5. (SBU) COMMENT: However, further action to resolve the dispute between the state and federal level will have to await the outcome of national elections on October 1. Conservative party circles have indicated that the next federal government could take up the issue of the renovation of Jewish cemeteries.

